

# National Current Affairs

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## **M Narendra Modi's two day visit to Gujarat**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on an official visit to Gujarat on 7th and 8th October 2017, during which he inaugurated several development projects.

- He set the foundation for a new airport near Rajkot and infrastructure projects including roads and highways, educational institutes and a new bridge connecting Okha and Bet Dwarka.
- Modi laid the foundation stone of the Bhadbhut Barrage to be built over the Narmada river at a cost of Rs 4,337 crore and flagged the Antyodaya Express between Udhna (Surat, Gujarat) and Jaynagar (Bihar) at Bharuch.
- At GNFC's Bharuch facility, Modi laid the foundation stone for a Rs550 crore Di-Calcium Phosphate (DCP) plant, a downstream project of GNFC, being established jointly with EcoPhos Belgium.
- He also launched Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan Scheme aimed at imparting digital literacy to citizens in rural areas.
- While inaugurating a medical college in Vadnagar, he said that the government has decided to set up one medical college for every four Lok Sabha constituencies across the country.
- He also said that the government had brought down the prices of stents and is working to make healthcare affordable for the poor.

## **International Conference on Dialogue of Civilizations – IV begins in New Delhi**

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in collaboration with National Geographic Society is hosting an international conference on "Dialogue of Civilizations – IV" from 8th – 15th October, 2017 at Delhi, Gandhinagar (in Gujarat) and Dholavira (in Gujarat).

- "Dialogue of Civilizations" conference was initiated by National Geographic Society in 2013.
- Objective of this conference is to encourage scholarly and public discourse about the five ancient, literate civilizations of the world, i.e. Egypt, Mesopotamia, South Asia, China and Mesoamerica.
- First conference of this series was inaugurated in Guatemala in 2013 followed by Turkey in 2014 and China in 2015.
- The present conference being held in India is the fourth in this series. The final dialogue has been planned to be held in Egypt.

### **Uttarakhand Govt. launches 'Solar Briefcase' to provide electricity in remote areas**

On October 8, 2017, Uttarakhand State Government and a charitable funding agency named Swan Cultural Center and Foundation, launched 'Solar Briefcase' in Kedarnath Dham.

- This initiative aims to provide electricity to far flung areas in Uttarakhand.
- Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has stated that around 47 villages and 1,40,000 families in Uttarakhand do not have access to electricity. Moreover there are 60 villages in the state where electrification has not yet been done due to the difficult terrain.
- In such situation, using off-grid electricity through solar briefcase is a good option.

### **President Ram Nath Kovind launches Rs.100 crore clean water initiative**

On 8th October 2017, President Ram Nath Kovind launched Mata Amritanandamayi Math (MAM)'s, 'Jivamritam' filtration system, a clean water initiative, in Vallikkavu, Kollam district of Kerala.

- 'Jivamritam' filtration system aims at providing filtration for clean drinking water to 1 crore villagers. The first phase of this project is to install 'Jivamritam' filtration systems for clean drinking water in 5,000 villages all over India.
- This project will be funded by MAM for Rs.100 crore. MAM has planned to implement all 5,000 Jivamritam systems within 1 year. Each Jivamritam system would filter daily drinking-water supply for around 400 five-member families.
- The Jivamritam system was conceptualised and designed by faculty and students of MAM's university, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (Amrita University).

### **Bangladesh, US begin disaster response exercise**

On October 8, 2017, Bangladesh Armed Forces Division and U.S. Army began their participation in the Pacific Resilience Disaster Response Exercise and Exchange (DREE). Bangladesh, US begin disaster response exercise.

- DREE is a civil-military disaster preparedness and response initiative between the governments of Bangladesh and US.
- The exercise will be conducted from 8th – 12th October 2017, in Dhaka and Mymensingh in Bangladesh.
- This exercise will focus on earthquake response plans for Dhaka and engage participants in logistical and medical emergency scenarios.
- Emphasis will be laid on reviewing plans and procedures in order to improve communication and coordination.

- Besides Bangladeshi government organisation, several international government organizations (IGO), and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will also take part in this exercise.

### **VAJRA Scheme: Government receives 260 applicants for visiting researcher programme**

The Centre's ambitious scheme to attract top international talent in the country's research and development ecosystem has received an enthusiastic response with nearly 260 global scientists filing applications, of whom 70 would be shortlisted

- The government announced the Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) Faculty scheme in May for inviting foreign scientists in Indian research and development ecosystem.
- Scientists visiting Indian institutions under the VAJRA Faculty scheme would be provided with a lump-sum amount of USD 15,000 in the first month of residency in a year and USD 10,000 per month afterwards.
- Public funded academic institutions and national laboratories are eligible to host VAJRA faculties.

### **Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS) in Himachal Pradesh**

The state government of Himachal Pradesh Government is implementing the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS) in the state. The objective of this insurance scheme is to provide easy access to various health services by providing an insurance cover to all senior citizen (above the age of 60 years)

- The candidate should be Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna (RSBY) smart card holder.
- The beneficiary has to pay only a nominal annual premium for SCHIS which is up to Rs. 500 per family.
- Moreover, Central and State government will share the insurance premium in the ratio of 90:10 under the Trust Model.
- All the financial transactions between government and insurance company will be done through bank channel.

### **Saudi Aramco opens India office in Gurugram**

The world's top oil exporter Saudi Aramco on Sunday opened an office of the company's subsidiary, Aramco Asia India, at Gurugram in India to boost its crude sales in the world's third-largest oil consuming nation.

- Saudi Aramco intends to partner with Indian companies and set up integrated business ventures in the hydrocarbon value chain in India, including to boost 'Make in India' activities.
- Saudi Aramco's Office in India will help in strengthening the existing buyer-supplier relationship between the two sides to a strategic partnership in the hydrocarbon sector.
- Aramco India plans to expand its operation by introducing hydrocarbon sector functions, including engineering services, IT operations and security and also R&D centre in the near future.
- Saudi Arabia is the second largest supplier to India after Iraq (19% of crude oil imports and 29% of LPG imports).

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## International Affairs

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### U.S. lifts sanctions against Sudan

The U.S. Government has revoked its long-standing comprehensive economic sanctions against Sudan.

- U.S. persons will be generally permitted to conduct business and financial transactions in and with Sudan and Sudanese companies. However, there will remain certain sanctioned individuals and entities in Sudan.
- In addition, since Sudan remains listed as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, strict export controls will continue to exist on exports of most items to Sudan.
- The Trump administration said the decision came after a 16-month effort that showed Sudan was “serious” about promoting regional stability. The State Department noted the Sudanese government had stopped its attacks on areas including Darfur and South Kordofan and was helping the US deal with the threat of the Lord’s Resistance Army, a relentless cult that has been waging war in northern Uganda for decades.
- The move to ease the sanctions comes barely two weeks after Sudan was removed from the list of countries whose citizens were banned from traveling to the United States.

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## Appointments & Resigns

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### PNB MetLife appoints Ashish Srivastava as MD & CEO

On 9th October 2017, PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Ltd (PNB MetLife), appointed Ashish Srivastava as MD & CEO.

- He would be responsible for leading all aspects of the business in India.
- Prior to this, Srivastava was an interim CEO at PNB MetLife. Srivastava joined PNB MetLife in 2013 as the Head of HR for the India business.

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## Science & Technology

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### **Scientists identify bacterium that could be source of antibiotics**

- Scientists have identified a new bacterium from a lime quarry in Karnataka and it will be expecting as a source of antibiotics for several diseases including malaria.
- Named as *Allostreptomyces indica* YIM 75704T, the bacterium belonged to Streptomycetaceae, a family of bacteria.
- They are largely found in soil and decaying vegetation. Most of them produce chains of spores and some are noted for their distinct 'earthy' odor that results from production of a volatile metabolite called geosmin.
- The new bacterium was isolated from an open pit limestone mine in the Gulbarga region of Karnataka. The area is known for its limestone mines and crushers.
- The study was conducted in collaboration with Gulbarga University, Northern Border University of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou, China. The other members of the team are Amit Kumar Sahu, Syed Raziuddin Quadri, Dayanand Agasar, Jamal Al Ruwaili, and Wen Jun-Li.

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## Sports

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### **China Open 2017**

On October 8, 2017, Spanish tennis player Rafael Nadal won the men's singles title at China Open 2017. He defeated Australia's Nick Kyrgios in the final match. French tennis player Caroline Garcia won the women's singles title at China Open 2017. She defeated Romania's Simona Halep in the final match.

### **India's Anupama Ramachandran wins inaugural snooker meet**

On 8th October 2017, Anupama Ramachandran of India won the World Open Under-16 Snooker Championship title in the girls category, in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

- Federation of Billiards Sports of Russia (FBSR) hosted the first ever World Open championships for Under-16 boys and girls. A total of 73 cueists from all over the world participated.
- In the girls category, Anupama Ramachandran of India won the World Open Under-16 Snooker Championship title. She knocked out top seed Keerthana Pandian by 3-1 in the finals.

### **Olympic Committee suspends Brazilian arm after chief's arrest**

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has suspended its Brazilian arm amid an investigation into corruption allegations.

- It also suspended the head of Brazil's Olympic committee, Carlos Nuzman, as an honorary member, and has frozen all its payments to the body.
- Mr Nuzman was arrested and is being investigated as part of a cash-for-votes probe linked to the bid for the 2016 Rio Games.
- The Brazilian committee's director general Leonardo Gryner was also get arrested.

### **Epic world solar car race begins in Australia**

2017 World Solar Challenge – the solar car race, began on October 8, 2017 from the northern Australian city of Darwin.

- In this race, 42 solar cars will cover a distance of 3,000 kms from Northern Australian city of Darwin to southern city of Adelaide.
- The route of the World Solar Challenge race passes through the desert heart of Australia.
- World Solar Challenge aims to showcase technology that could be used for commercial purposes in future.
- First edition of World Solar Challenge took place in 1987. It has now become one of the world's foremost innovation challenges.

### **India bag 37 gold medals, finish second in 20th Asia Masters meet**

India finished second in 20th Asia Masters Athletics Championship held in Rugao, China. and bagged 146 medals, including 37 golds, 43 silvers and 66 bronze. China was topped.

- 70-year-old PN Mishra of Gorakhpur won gold in hammer throw
- Saifai's 35-year-old Siddharth Krishna bagged a bronze in 5000 meter walk
- 35-year-old Lal Bahadur Yadav of Kanpur won a gold in Hammer throw
- Former flying officer of Indian Air Force, 76-year-old Shivnath brought four bronze medals in 2000 meter hurdles, 80 meters hurdles, 4×100 meters relay and 4×400 meters relay race
- The 20 countries were participated in the meet held between September 24 and September 28, 2017.

### **Ajeetesh Sandhu wins first-ever Asian Tour title in Taipei**

On 8th October 2017, Indian golfer 28-year-old Ajeetesh Sandhu won Asian Tour title at the USD 500,000 Yeangder Tournament Players Championship (TPC) at Taipei.

- Sandhu had a score of two-under 70 and a total score of 11-under 277 which consisted of three birdies and one bogey. He beat America's Johannes Veerman by one shot.
- The Yeangder Tournament Players Championship is a golf tournament on the Asian Tour. It was played for the first time in September 2010 at the Linkou International Golf and Country Club in Taipei, Taiwan.

### **Lewis Hamilton wins Japanese Grand Prix, extends lead at top**

On October 8, 2017, Formula One motorist Lewis Hamilton won Japanese Grand Prix. Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes finished the race 1.2 seconds ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

- Another motorist from Red Bull, Daniel Ricciardo finished third.
- With this win, Lewis Hamilton has reached closer to Formula One world championship title, as his closest rival Sebastian Vettel had to retire in the fourth lap of this race due to engine problems.

### **Indian pair wins gold at World Archery Youth Championship 2017**

Mixed pair of Jemson Ningthoujam and Ankita Bhakat clinched the recurve team gold medal as India returned with three medals from the World Archery Youth Championship in Rosario.

- This is India's first world title at the youth championships since Deepika Kumari's victories in 2009 and 2011. India also bagged one silver and one bronze in a promising show by the youngsters.



- Ningthoujam and Bhakat, seeded ninth, had upset top-seed Korea in the quarterfinals, before beating their Russian opponents 6-2 in the final.

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## Awards & Recognition

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### **T D Radhakrishnan selected for Vayalar award**

Noted Novelist T D Radhakrishnan's has been selected for this year's prestigious Vayalar award.

- The award will be presented to him on October 27, 2017, the death anniversary of poet and lyricist Vayalar Ramavarma.
- Vayalar Award was instituted in 1977 by the Vayalar Ramavarma Memorial Trust in memory of Malayalam poet and lyricist Vayalar.
- It is given for the best literary work in Malayalam.

### **GCMMF awarded best FMCG in food sector by IAA**

The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), was awarded as the best FMCG in the food sector, at the 5th International Advertising Associations (IAA) Leadership Awards, in Mumbai.

- K.M.Jhala, Chief Operating Officer, GCMMF received the best FMCG in the food sector award at the 5th International Advertising Associations (IAA) Leadership Awards.
- GCMMF manages brand AMUL. Amul is India's largest food brand with annual brand turnover of Rs.38,000 crore.

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## Obituary

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### **Congress leader Prabhakar pant Ojharkar no more**

Congress leader Prabhakar pant Ojharkar passed away on October 7, 2017 in Nashik, Maharashtra.

- He had been vice-president of Devlali Cantonment Board for 22 years.



- His funeral on October 7, 2017, was attended by a large number of people.

### **Noted journalist Bismoy Kumar Mohanty dies**

On 8th October 2017, noted journalist Bismoy Kumar Mohanty died due to heart attack at Puri, Odisha.

- He was the owner and editor of Odia daily 'Ajikali' published from Balasore. He was the president of Odisha Small and Medium Newspaper Organisation.
- He was also associated with a number of social and cultural organisations.
- His wife Bijay Laxmi Mohanty is also publisher and editor of language daily 'Sambad Bahika'.

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## **Important Days**

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### **Indian Air-force day – October 8**

On October 8 2017, The Indian Air Force (IAF) celebrated its 85th anniversary. The celebrations were marked by a stellar show in the skies by various aircraft at the Hindon Air Force Station in Ghaziabad

- The air display started at 8 AM with flag bearing skydivers of famous AKASH GANGA Team dropping out of AN-32 aircraft in their colourful canopies.
- IAF's popular Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team (SKAT) also performed on that special day. The SKAT belongs to the number 52 Squadron. The primary role of the team was air defence, whereas its secondary role was ground attack.